

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, GW, UR, WB
SUBJ: BERLIN: SOVIET PRESS TAKES MILD LINE

REF: (A) MOSCOW 7651, (B) MOSCOW 6740, (C) MOSCOW 7084

SUMMARY: A TASS COMMENTARY ON THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
QUADRIpartite AGREEMENT (QA) TAKES A MILD LINE ON
BERLIN SITUATION, BUT REJECTS EFFORTS BY "CERTAIN FORCES"
TO CLAIM "SPECIAL STATUS" FOR WEST BERLIN. TWO OTHER
PRESS ITEMS ECHO THIS LINE MORE BRIEFLY. END SUMMARY.

1. TASS ENGLISH WIRE JUNE 2 CARRIES LONG ARTICLE ON BERLIN
BY TASS POLITICAL COMMENTATOR, YURI KORNILOV, ENTITLED
"STRATAGEMS AROUND WEST BERLIN, WHY?". (WE ASSUME
DEPARTMENT HAS FULL FBIS TEXT.) KORNILOV PIECE HAS NOT
YET BEEN PUBLISHED IN CENTRAL PRESS.

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2. COMMENTARY EXTOLLS THE QA FOR INTER ALIA "ENDING
THE VIOLENT FLUCTUATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL
BAROMETER DUE TO THE WEST BERLIN ISSUE." IT GOES
ON TO ACCUSE "CERTAIN FRG QUARTERS" OF TRYING TO
"COMPLICATE" THE SITUATION AND UNDERMINE THE
PROVISIONS OF THE QA, BUT DOES NOT SUGGEST THE FRG

GOVERNMENT IS AMONG THEM. RATHER IT ENDS BY WELCOMING "DISPATCHES COMING FROM BONN (WHICH) INDICATE THAT GOVERNMENTAL QUARTERS OF THE FRG WELCOME THE POSITION OF THE USSR, REGARDING WEST BERLIN AS A FIELD FOR DETENTE." COMMENT ON THE "LONDON STATEMENT" IS LIMITED TO A RHETORICAL QUERY ABOUT WHETHER THE STATEMENT "BY A NUMBER OF WESTERN COUNTRIES" IS NOT EVIDENCE OF OUTSIDE ENCOURAGEMENT AND INSTIGATION FOR THOSE "CERTAIN QUARTERS OF THE FRG."

3. KORNILOV DOES POINT THE FINGER AT "SOME LEADERS OF THE WEST BERLIN SENAT" FOR "PROVOCATIVE ACTIONS DESIGNED TO UNDERMINE THE POLITICAL STATUS OF THE CITY." AS TO WHAT ACTIONS KORNILOV HAS IN MIND, HE IS LESS THAN CRYSTAL CLEAR. HE DOES MENTION, AMONG OTHER ITEMS, ATTEMPTS TO "IMPLANT FRG PRESENCE IN WEST BERLIN BY LOCATING FEDERAL OFFICES AND HOLDING FRG GOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS IN THE CITY AND HE NOTES THAT "EEC AGENCIES ALL BUT EXERT POWER IN THAT CITY."

4. THE COMMENTARY ENDS ON AN UPBEAT NOTE WITH A LONG QUOTE FROM BREZHNEV'S MAY 30 TOAST AT THE ZHIVKOV DINNER (REF A), THE "WELCOME" OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED FRG GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES, AND A HOPE THAT "THE TREND TOWARDS A SOBER AND THOUGHTFUL POLICY WITH REGARD TO WEST BERLIN WILL PREVAIL DESPITE THE EFFORTS BY THE FOES OF DETENTE."

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5. PRAVDA'S INTERNATIONAL WEEK COMMENTARY (JUNE 5), BY BORIS AVERCHENKO, MAKES THE SAME GENERAL POINTS, BUT WITHOUT SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO ATTEMPTS TO LOCATE FRG OR EC OFFICES IN BERLIN AND WITHOUT CITATION OF BREZHNEV SPEECH. MAIN POINT IS THE HOPE THAT WEST BERLIN WILL "STEP BY STEP BECOME A CONSTRUCTIVE FACTOR IN EUROPEAN COOPERATION."

6. THE SAME EXACT PHRASE IS USED TO CONCLUDE A TASS BERLIN ITEM (PRAVDA JUNE 6) REPLAYING KEY POINTS OF THE "NEUES DEUTSCHLAND" ARTICLE ON THE QA ANNIVERSARY.

7. COMMENT: BY COMPARISON WITH SOVIET PRESS FARE ON BERLIN IN THE NOT SO DISTANT PAST, KORNILOV AND THE OTHER ITEMS ARE CONCILIATORY. THESE COMMENTS, Milder even than PRAVDA'S COMMENT ON THE LONDON STATEMENT (REF B), ARE A FURTHER INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS WISH TO SOFT-PEDAL THE BERLIN ISSUE

FOR NOW. AS SUCH THIS SOVIET MEDIA APPROACH IS IN
STARK CONTRAST TO THE HONECKER ATTACK ON SCHMIDT
RECENTLY (REF C) SINCE FRG GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN BERLIN IS ALL
BUT DISMISSED. BY THE SAME TOKEN THE OTHER THREE
POWERS ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY CRITICIZED AND THE
LONDON STATEMENT GETS ONLY PASSING AND VERY MILD
CRITICISM.
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